BALLET TODAY

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SPECIAL NUMBER: SADLER'S WELLS IN NEW YORK

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Photograph by Angus McBean

MARGOT FONTEYN

BALLET TODAY

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Offices - 244 HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.1
Telephone : Chancery 8471
EDITORIAL - Telephone: Flaxman 9552

EDITORIAL COMMENT

THIS number of *Ballet Today* is dedicated to Sadler's Wells Ballet, just back in England after their unparalleled series of successes in the United States of America and Canada. In order to do full justice to their triumph some of this magazine's usual features and reviewing of current events have had to go by the board but I do not imagine a single reader will complain. Buried up to eye level in press cuttings and pictures, I had to make a decision as to what exactly my readers would most like to see. I decided that photographs of dancers on stage or posed in costume took very much the same wherever they may happen to be and that the really interesting pictures were those showing the dancers round and about New York and at the various social functions which, as we have all heard, kept them more than fully occupied. So the following pages try to show this wonderful story in photographs selected from the enormous batches with which Mr. Walter E. Owen was so careful to keep me supplied. I know everyone here will be most grateful to him for these off-duty glimpses of our well loved dancers, so I thank him now on their behalf.

Delighted as we are that Covent Garden will seem like itself again for some months to come, at the same time there can be no doubt that the company badly need more than the brief few days of rest allowed them before the commencement of rehearsals. They must not be blamed if their performances show signs of fatigue and strain. Never have they worked at such constant high pressure as during this tour, for it must be remembered that their attendance at social functions was a duty as well as a pleasure and that they went, not only as dancers, but as representatives of the English people. We should thank them all for being such splendid ambassadors and for winning for us so many friends, as they most certainly did. After their final New York performance the staff of the Metropolitan Opera House gave a farewell party for the whole company and told them that "they were the loveliest people who had ever appeared at the Met."

The three Nijinsky Gala Performances at the Empress Hall on November 21st, 22nd and 23rd did little to reconcile one to this manner of presenting ballet, and neither did the unseemly financial wrangle which made newspaper headlines. All the same we do not commonly in these days have so much brilliance collected together on one stage though, if the truth be told, only Toumanova and Skibine seemed to have taken the measure of that vast space. They blazed in *Don Quixote* and in both this and in the second act of *Giselle* Skibine danced even better than at Covent Garden this summer. He has the priceless gift of making immediate friends with his audience. *L'Après-midi d'un Faune* now seems irreparably dated though in a suitable setting Babilée could possibly save it. I refuse to believe that *Capriccio Espagnol* originally looked anything like the poor little version here offered with a *corps de ballet* of four. Only Massine's superb entrance gave any clue as to what it may once have been.

Lack of space this month prevents a detailed account of the Paris season of Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées, but Monsieur Ferdinand Reyna writes that none of the new ballets have been very notable. *The Artist and his Model* by Massine for Skorik and Algaroff was not ready for the first night but seems to have been something of a disaster when presented later. John Taras's *Holiday Task* with a scenario by Kochno showed dancers returning to work after a holiday during which each has had to create a role—Little Lord Fauntleroy, a Fragonard model and so on. Apparently Cecil Beaton's décor is the most noteworthy part of this ballet. Much was expected of Babilée's *Tyl Eulenspiegel* but here again was disappointment, for although he has understood his own qualities and exploited them well, he has not been able to come to terms with the group movements. The fourth ballet, *Radio Repairer*, also by Taras, was greeted with hoots and whistles, the unfortunate dancers concerned being Danielle Darmance

(*Continued on page 19*)

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The next issue of BALLET TODAY will be coming out in February, 1950. There will be a slight reduction in the number of pages and the price will be **One Shilling.** From then onwards, BALLET TODAY will come out **each month.** The annual subscription for 1950 will therefore be 12s. including postage. Subscriptions which do not expire in December, 1949, will, of course, be extended to cover the amount subscribed.

PAMELA
GERD
BERYL
NADIA
VIOLET
AND
SHEARE
FOR A "
CAKE"
AT LA C
AIRPO

SOME OF THE GIRLS PHOTOGRAPHED ON ARRIVAL. HOW MANY DO YOU RECOGNISE?

SADLER'S WELLS AMERICAN DEBUT

By MARY CLARKE

THERE is probably, at each moment in time, one place on the earth where a lover of dancing simply must be. On October 9th, 1949, that place was inside the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City and for the rest of my life I shall be grateful that I was there.

The Met, as it is always called, is, from the outside, a large, drab mass of brickwork which stands between 39th and 40th Streets on Broadway just below Times Square. It is in the heart of the garment-makers' district and instead of the barrowloads of vegetables which obstruct the streets around Covent Garden, there are trolleys full of dresses, suits, overcoats—every conceivable kind of off-the-peg garment—which are trundled round from factory to wholesaler to retailer by hand and seem miraculously to emerge safely from the holocaust of traffic through which they pass.

The auditorium of the Opera House is considerably larger than Covent Garden (it has a capacity of about 4,000 as compared with the Garden's 2,000 odd). It is similarly shaped but is wider, deeper and higher. There are five great circles and behind them all are wide promenades carpeted in crimson. The woodwork is dark and the upholstery crimson so the interior does not have the period charm and elegance of Covent Garden. But the Met does have a superb curtain of gold brocade which looks indescribably lovely when lit by footlights and forms a perfect background when dancers take calls in front of it.

The Gala Opening of the Sadler's Wells season was timed for 8 p.m. instead of the usual 8.30, so that the

PRESS PHOTOGRAPHERS WERE ON THE JOB EVEN BEFORE MISS NINETTE DE VALOIS, HERE SEEN LEADING THE MALE CONTINGENT, HAD SET FOOT ON AMERICAN SOIL

A BROADCAST WAS ONE OF THE FIRST CHORES FOR MARGOT FONTEYN AND ROBERT HELPMANN. BAIRD HASTINGS, WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN WRITER ON BALLET, IS PUTTING THE QUESTIONS

critics would be able to see the whole of *The Sleeping Beauty* and still meet their deadlines. By 6 p.m. a knot of people was waiting to be let in to fight for the best places in the Standing Room (about 400 standees are allowed in a position equivalent to the back of the Stalls Circle at Covent Garden). By 7.45 the whole pavement outside the Met was seething with people; people trying to enter, people still hoping to buy tickets, sharpers trying to sell tickets for fabulous sums, and sheer sightseers. It was stiflingly hot (the temperature had rocketed to 85!) and the Met was packed full. Every seat was occupied, the standees were four deep on the main floor and there were enough people wedged into the backs of the first tier boxes (the famous Golden Horseshoe) to give the New York Fire Department conniptions (American for "fits"). Below the Mayor's box were draped the Union Jack, the Stars and Stripes and the flag of New York City. Expectations were high for the Hurok publicity machine had splashed the company all over New York, and all Society and the dance world were there in full feather.

Alexander Woolcott once remarked that the Englis have an extraordinary ability for flying into a gre calm. Despite all the worries and preparations of th months preceding their American debut, Sadler's Well on the actual opening night did work themselves int an appearance of perfect *sangfroid*. The performance *The Sleeping Beauty* which they gave excelled anything had ever seen them do in Europe and I was as surprise and impressed as any New Yorker.

The highspots were, of course, Fonteyn's Ros Adagio and the great last act *pas de deux*. Both wer danced with complete confidence, ease and beauty It was the performance of Fonteyn's career an Helpmann excelled himself as Prince Florimund. A that evening and during the second night repeat per formance (which was every bit as good) I sought t define the extra something that had been added t their interpretations and finally I decided that "gran manner" best summed it up.

There is a legend at the Met that it costs a certai number of dollars to raise the gold curtain so th

management usually limits the number of times that it shall rise and fall at the end of a performance. The night Sadler's Wells opened in New York, however, business acumen bowed before the reception and the company took call after call. It was a mass triumph and at the same time an individual triumph; "a great company" and "a great ballerina" were the phrases on everyone's lips.

The notices (the papers could be bought on Times Square by 1.30 a.m.) were excellent. Both sober dance critics and hardened columnists were unanimous in their praise. Only one bored gossip writer complained that it was "as dignified and as unexciting as one of Queen Mary's hats".

The question, of course, was—could they keep it up? Over the season it became obvious that they could, although it also became quite clear that all the repertoire was not going to find equal favour and that a different opening night programme might have put a very different complexion on the company's reception in America.

The second programme consisted of *The Rake's Progress*, *Symphonic Variations*, *Façade* and *Hamlet*. I think everyone who knew *The Rake's Progress* was disappointed with the way it looked on the wide Metropolitan stage. It was well enough performed but the whole design of the ballet, exploiting as it does the subtleties of small gestures and movements, and the facial expressiveness of the dancers, seemed wrong for so vast a theatre. Nevertheless it did get good notices and was probably the most successful of the serious modern ballets presented. It was universally admired and praised but I am quite certain that the New York audience missed a lot of its points and did not *enjoy* it nearly as much as the English one does.

DIA NERINA AND ALEXANDER GRANT LOOKING AT THE TUE OF ATLAS IN FRONT OF INTERNATIONAL BUILDING. ST. PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL IS IN THE BACKGROUND

Symphonic Variations was by no means the unqualified success in New York that it has been in Europe. There was admiration for the dancers (Brian Shaw made a great impression) and for Sophie Fedorovitch's beautiful décor but the choreography was, inevitably, compared to Balanchine and found wanting. The Americans have, after all, been watching Balanchine ballets for nearly as long as we have been watching Ashton ballets in this country and they naturally relate any work of pure dancing to the standards they know best. They do, also, love brilliance and colour on the stage and the extreme simplicity and lyric mood of *Symphonic Variations*, which make it so beloved in Europe, seemed to pass them by. Yes, it's all right, they would say, but you should have seen *Danses Concertantes*.

Façade, to the stupefaction of everyone but Sol Hurok, was a smash hit. It certainly came over beautifully and was danced with enormous charm and spirit. The audiences doted on the whole thing and the notices were unanimously excellent. Twenty years old it might be, but it was brand spandy new to New York and even if the Armstrong set and costumes are not as good as his original ones, they are still fresh and colourful. The satire is directed at the dance styles of the late twenties, admittedly, but those very dance styles have survived in many parts of America and Popular Song may still be seen in many a cheap stage show not far from Broadway.

Hamlet, like *The Rake's Progress*, suffered from the size of the stage which robbed it of the concentration and "punch" that it originally possessed. There was some difficulty with the initial and final green spotlight which managed to hit more of the backdrop than Helpmann's face. Reception was only fair and the notices mixed. Walter Terry, in the *Herald Tribune*, best summed up the objections: "*Hamlet*", he wrote, " . . . provided its choreographer, Robert Helpmann, with every possible excuse to tear himself to bits emotionally and he availed himself of all opportunities. He has taken as his springboard the sequence which commences "For in that sleep of death what dreams may come", and they all come. One wishes that he had chosen to convey the emotional crises involving Hamlet in dance movement rather than in highly exaggerated pantomime so that one could have sensed the drama of inner turmoil. As it was, only the overt actions, the emotionally unmotivated tantrums of the hero were conveyed".

The next première was *Cinderella*. The first night did not go too well and the notices were a little doubt-

ful with more palms going to the Ugly Sisters than to the choreography. But on the second night the whole thing seemed to go vastly better and the ballet settled in as one of the major successes. Ashton and Helpmann received roars of laughter for their Ugly Sisters but personally I thought they were clowning a wee bit too much. Both Fonteyn and Shearer had big successes as Cinderella. Michael Somes was very much liked as the Prince and both Grant and Shaw were applauded as the Jester. The middle act adagio—that perfect picture of two people in love—was the climax of all performances.

Le Lac des Cygnes, first presented in New York on October 20th, was the greatest success of all. The audience cheered and cheered their approval of Fonteyn and Somes and the critics went overboard. "It is absurd that New York has never before seen a full four-act version of this famous masterpiece", said John Martin in the *New York Times*, "but to have a first glimpse of it in such a production as this makes the waiting worth while". Discussing Margot Fonteyn's performance, he concluded: "A showier performance would be easy to recall in either act, but a richer, fuller, more altogether beautiful one has not yet crossed our path". "Naturally", said Walter Terry, "the centre of attraction in any performance of *Le Lac des Cygnes* is the Swa Queen herself. Margot Fonteyn is, and I am happy t be unequivocal about this, the greatest Swan Queen have ever seen". Other critics proclaimed "the fine experience in classic ballet this generation has seen" an "*Swan Lake* is the best of them all". The only dissentir voice was raised by the gentleman who called th *fouettés* a Cook's tour of the stage and later recom mended his readers to go to Radio City in order to se such things done properly.

Beryl Grey and John Field danced two matinée pe formances of *Le Lac des Cygnes* and received excellen notices. Beryl Grey was in fact liked in everythir she danced in New York and I was amazed and delighte to observe how Field had suddenly found himself both dancer and artist.

By this time, of course, Sadler's Wells were com pletely established as a smash hit. They were th greatest ballet success ever known in New York rivalling the hit musical *South Pacific* in popularity an box office takings (and dubbed *North Atlantic* by th press), and winning for ballet the banner headline i *Variety* for the first time since the paper's foundatio in 1905. It was fortunate that the success was s complete and overwhelming because it did carry som

RICHARD ELLIS AND HIS WIFE, CHRISTINE DU BOULAY, AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART. A TOTEM POLE CAN BE SEEN IN THE GARDEN BEHIND MISS DU BOULAY

THE VIEW FROM THE OBSERVATION ROOF (85TH FLOOR) OF THE EMPIRE STATE BUILDING HAD AN ENDLESS FASCINATION FOR ROBERT HELPMANN WHO SPENT HIS FEW SPARE MOMENTS UP THERE

of the modern works which, presented without the réclame of the company's reputation, would have fallen very flat indeed.

Miracle in the Gorbals "got by", but only just. The ballet people thought it was "bad Tudor" and the Modern Dance people thought it wasn't dancing at all. "It is done in dramatic rather than choreographic terms, and there can be no doubt that the stageful of people is skilfully handled", wrote John Martin. "But there is surely not a cliché missed or a platitude avoided."

Apparitions was another failure. The audience thought it all rather old-fashioned and inept and dreadfully slow. The ballroom scene, however, did get a very genuine ovation.

Wedding Bouquet was well received and popular, the only complaint being that the words were almost unintelligible. Lambert put them over as only he can but the amplification was muzzy and unsatisfactory. (Why is it that third-rate music halls can always fit microphones which are all too clear, but opera houses never?)

The last programme on November 2nd, introduced *Checkmate* and *Job*. *Checkmate* joined the modern successes, with special praise for Beryl Grey, but *Job* was a dead loss. No modern works came anywhere near *The Sleeping Beauty* and *Le Lac des Cygnes* in popularity.

The answer, of course, is that the full-length classics were entirely new to the New York audience and they did display the greatest qualities of Sadler's Wells and, above all, the ones which are lacking in American companies. American dancers were the first to remark and applaud the superiority of the Sadler's Wells *corps de ballet*, the *ensemble* work and the general standard of production. A good many critics made pointed remarks about the blessings of Government assistance and the necessity for some kind of security both for the dancer and for the administration to develop long-term plans. The feeling was very strong that, dancer for dancer, Americans were just as gifted as English (personally, after five months in America, I would say that the national aptitude for dancing is greater there than in England), and if only some way could be found of overcoming the at present almost insuperable economic difficulties they could develop companies just as fine as Sadler's Wells.

Fonteyn was recognised as a unique artist; some people named other ballerinas whom they thought stood equal or who held special places in their hearts, but no one attempted to find a peer.

For the rest, however, there was admiration but not amazement. The male dancing was emphatically found unsatisfactory; several individuals were well liked but the sum effect was thought inferior to

American standards, and I heartily endorse the verdict. In every style of dancing—ballet, modern, musical comedy and film—male dancing in America is of a very high standard which we do not approximate in this country.

The great impression made by the female *corps de ballet* was unquestionably deserved. In America it contained many dancers who rank as soloists in England and the superb performances that it gave (above all in *Le Lac des Cygnes*) only underlined the fact that it is impossible to have too experienced dancers in minor roles. It may be all very dull for the dancer, put down from sometime *Swan Queen* to a mere cygnet, but for the audience it is a very wonderful experience.

The comparatively poorer impression made by the modern works was due to their being measured against masterworks of the American dance theatre which do set a very high standard. Many of us may not have entirely agreed with the choice of repertoire taken to America but I doubt if any other selection would have fared better in comparison with the works of Balanchine, Tudor, Robbins, Loring, de Mille or such superb modern dance choreographers as Martha Graham, Doris Humphrey, Hanya Holm, Valerie Bettis and José Limon.

For the musical policy of the company there was nothing but admiration and Constant Lambert had l great personal success as conductor.

Criticisms made were genuine and honest and in eve case the company was judged against the highe criterion. The public welcome and the overwhelmi hospitality lavished upon the company by the who of New York's ballet society was heartwarming in i generosity. The best possible way in which Engla could say "thank you" would be to invite *and welco royally* the American companies to Covent Garde For three years we have waited in vain for a return vi from Ballet Theatre, and Balanchine's company no appearing at the New York City Centre, equall deserves a European showing. We want to see them; th Americans long to come. What can be getting in the wa

The Walter E. Owen photograph on the cover shows Nora Kaye greeting David Webster, Leslie Edwards, Robert Helpmann, Margot Fonteyn and Frederick Ashton on their arrival at the La Guardia airport, New York. S. Hurok on the right. All photographs of Sadler's Wells Ballet in New York, except where otherwise credited, are by Walter E. Owen.

GERD LARSEN AND HAROLD TURNER OUTSIDE THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY ON FIFTH AVENUE. THERE IS A NICE STORY ABOUT THE LIONS (ONLY ONE OF WHICH IS SEEN HERE) IF YOU CAN GET ANYONE TO TELL IT TO YOU

ONE OF THE FIRST PARTIES FOR THE COMPANY WAS GIVEN BY NATHALIE BRANITSKA AND JAN HOYER, FORMER MEMBERS OF THE DIAGHILEV AND COL. DE BASIL BALLETS RUSSES. FRANKLIN WHITE IS STANDING WITH JOHN FIELD, ALEXANDER GRANT, CHRISTINE DU BOULAY, GRANT MOURADOFF (AMERICAN TEACHER) AND NADIA NERINA. SEATED ARE ANNE HEATON, RICHARD ELLIS, MARY SKEAPING (SADLER'S WELLS' BALLET MISTRESS), NATHALIE BRANITSKA AND TINA SCARPOVA (MRS. IGOR YOUSKEVITCH)

A DANCER LOOKS AT THE AMERICAN VISIT

By FRANKLIN WHITE

THE whirlpool of excitement set in motion by the Sadler's Wells' American and Canadian tour has somewhat settled, and it is now possible during this, our third week of the New York season, to look back at and analyse some of the impressions gained during the past few weeks.

The excitement started to grow about half a year ago, when the first results of the previous months of planning began to take form. I wonder how many people realise how much work has to go into the making of a tour such as this one. . . . It is as well that it is not looked into, for the sight of the prodigious amount of work to be tackled might banish some of the essential illusion of the theatre. A tedious list could be made of things to be done by all the many departments of the Covent Garden Opera House and the staff of the Sadler's Wells Ballet. Rearrangement and rehearsal of the cast in the selected ballets was but one section of many things to be perfected before the "rehearsal season" at Covent Garden. Then, the result of months of work by all was seen in essentially the exact state that they are now being presented at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Anticipation did not end there, for there was the journey by aeroplane, a mode of travel new to the majority of the company. Two B.O.A.C. airliners were used. The majority of the male members of the company travelled by regular air-line. We were preceded by the females, who, while travelling in the chartered aircraft, had odd companions in the form of theatre baskets. This division was necessitated to get correct weight for the first aircraft. In spite of flying at slightly different times and routes, the two planes met once at Gander Airport, where we landed in time to

Photograph by Courtesy of "Dance News"

NO NEED TO SAY THAT THESE HAPPY PEOPLE ARE MARGOT FONTEYN AND S. HUROK HERE SEEN AT THE END-OF-SEASON PARTY MR. HUROK GAVE TO THE WHOLE COMPANY AT THE EXCLUSIVE SHERRY'S RESTAURANT

watch the departure of the girls on the last lap of the long flight. The gaining of five hours caused some confusion, for we repeatedly arrived in time for breakfast in various countries.

After several years of rumours regarding the possibilities of a New York season and a consistent flow of information about our activities, expectation and interest on the part of the American public was great, proven by the fact that we had an advance booking of a hundred and sixty-four thousand dollars' worth of seats. Publicity was exceptionally prevalent. This was apparent to us on our first meeting with the voluminous Sunday papers, in which much space was given to articles and photographs of Sadler's Wells. There was much curiosity over what use had been made of Hogarth and Blake (much of whose works, including Blake's *Book of Job,* can be found in this country). The presentation of the full-length classical ballets and the first three-act English ballet, *Cinderella*, had caused an equal stir. The combination of all this advanced activity built up to the night when two commodities, an English ballet company and an American audience, would meet, neither possessing more than a reported knowledge of the other and with no idea as to the result of the meeting.

I have known few such completely enthralling performances as that of *The Sleeping Beauty* on the first night at the Metropolitan. It was quite evident that the whole company was keyed up to the climax of the months of preparation. In the crowded wings the tension relaxed into expressions of relief, and general enthusiasm grew simultaneously with that of the audience as the first signs of success began to appear shortly after the opening of the performance. So great was the responsiveness of the audience that at first it was quite disturbing. They continually broke in to applaud any section of movement that appealed to them, which, on occasions, had the startling effect of drowning all recognition of the music. There was the feeling that the audience had, from the moment the curtain rose and the first long round of applause broke out, made up their minds that they would like us and were ever more pleased as the evening progressed.

Later that night, a convoy of coaches, police cars and cycles, with their red lights flashing and siren

wailing, traversed sections of New York to the residence of Mayor William O'Dwyer, where the entire company was entertained on the lawns by the banks of the East River. Returning to the hotel in the small hours, we were able to read of our success in the already printed press reports. From then on, booking rose to the approximate figure of nine thousand dollars a day. By this, Sadler's Wells established record figures for a touring company at the Metropolitan Opera House.

In New York, shows have not infrequently been known to come off after a few nights of performances. On the other hand, when there is a success, there seem no bounds to the way in which appreciation is shown. Press and audience take the lead with unbelievable warmth. We were ever conscious of the continual presence of the press and newsreel photographers taking shots of our every movement from the moment of our landing. Even the daily hour of class work was not spared. Individual hospitality and generosity (qualities which appear to be abundant in any case) are showered upon one from all sides. One is whisked off to every conceivable type of life and entertainment day and night. Sleep is denied and kindnesses are substituted. Working under these conditions is a strain but adds an exhilaration which shows itself in performance. Dullness and a feeling of routine are a thing of the past. A more elated welcome would not have been possible.

Among many courtesies extended to us were invitations from the American School of Ballet and Ballet Arts to take classes which were at all times at the disposal of the company. This afforded us the opportunity to work under Balanchine, Doubrovska, Oboukhoff, Lazovsky, Nemchinova, Craske, and Caton.

On this trip, I found the speed of air travel unsettling. One leaves at evening in one country and spends the next day many thousands of miles away. There is no time to dismiss the idiosyncrasies of the previous country before one is battling with those in the next. On board ship, there is time to think about what one knows of the ways of life ahead. Not that I always do this consciously, but the actual time spent in a transitory state dismisses the past and prepares me for anything in the near future. Consequently, in New York, there were differences of life and approach to work in the theatre to which it took some time to adapt myself. Within half an hour of leaving the airport, I was in an hotel room on Broadway among the maze of gaudy neon signs. I had forgotten the little I had heard of the necessity to advertise in every form. My first

ANOTHER BIG PARTY WAS GIVEN BY GEORGE CHAFFEE, DANCE TEACHER AND OWNER OF WHAT IS PROBABLY THE MOST VALUABLE BALLET COLLECTION IN THE WORLD, SOME OF HIS TREASURES BEING SEEN HERE. LEFT TO RIGHT ARE CONSTANT LAMBERT, GEORGE CHAFFEE, HELEN DZHERMOLINSKA (EDITOR OF "DANCE" MAGAZINE), BERYL GREY, CONSTANTINE (HOLLYWOOD PHOTOGRAPHER) AND MARY CLARKE

Photograph by courtesy of "Dance News"

THE WHOLE COMPANY WERE INVITED TO SPEND A DAY AT MR. J. ALDEN TALBOT'S ESTATE "SMOKE RISE". HERE MARGOT FONTEYN, FREDERICK ASHTON AND ROBERT HELPMANN ARE PICTURED WITH NORA KAYE OF BALLET THEATRE

shock was the lights. Nothing appears to remain still for a fraction of a second. This makes it impossible to read the sign before it appears to take fright and dashes over the façade of several buildings in ever-changing rises and colour. The impact of this was terrific. No less so was the noise at night, the monotonous din of the traffic, plus the efforts of the crews of incinerator clearing vans shouting orders to each other while dragging out the ash bins. Next morning, equally alarming was the sound of riveting on the construction of a nearby skyscraper combined with the screech of fire engines and loud speaker vans, proclaiming the qualities of anything from politics to tooth paste.

The different method from that used by our English unions also took a little time to get used to. A heavily populated area, such as New York, results in "a survival of the fittest" attitude and, among other social problems, necessitates strong unions. Among some unfamiliar rules, there is a two-hour time limit for daily rehearsal and many forms of overtime pay. I had an amusing experience with this strict keeping of scheduled time during the first stage rehearsal at the Met. When I made my first entrance as the Wolf in the Red Riding Hood *divertissement*, the iron curtain fell. The two-hour limit had been reached and rehearsals for that day had to finish. In any country it is always difficult to reconcile the meeting of two different mediums, an ordinary job and a profession. Satisfactory working conditions, necessary for the first, are not always applicable to the second, in which a fluidity of procedure is necessary. In most respects, conditions in America have been made good for the artist, but it would be well for those in austerity to remember that even in a land of plenty there are many difficulties.

In closing, I would say that among particularly successful ballets, the presentation of some of the full-length classics, until now only partly known over here, has proved successful beyond any expectation. Both press and public have been unanimous in acclaiming this. Equal stress has been made on the team-work of the company. The years of consistent work together have proved their worth. This has been recognised.

Among many vivid memories will remain the sound of the whole audience, even those under the pink stud-like lights of the Diamond Horseshoe, breaking into a simultaneous cheer after some particularly outstanding dancing.

In spite of the now easy contact of countries to each other, perhaps because of it, the ways of life and standards of value of individual countries come too often under the strain of criticism and consequent lack of tolerance. Surely the success of this tour by ourselves, and those of others, is proof that such visiting companies can be perfect ambassadors in exchange of good will.

THE AMERICAN VIEW OF SADLER'S WELLS

By MURRAY N. FRIEDMAN

THE Sadler's Wells Ballet has left New York, but it will be a long time before the excitement it has generated dies down. From Beryl Grey's first entrance as the Lilac Fairy on opening night, to Miss de Valois' curtain speech after the final performance, we were treated to four weeks of dancing which sometimes rose to an inspired level, but never fell below a uniformly high standard of excellence.

Not within memory has a season of ballet in New York been so successful. Over one hundred thousand people crowded in to see the thirty-four performances (a special matinée was scheduled to take care of the demand) and three hundred thousand dollars were paid in to the box office and mail order departments. Yet even these figures do not begin to tell the entire story. Thousands upon thousands were turned away. People queued up at one o'clock in the afternoon for the one hundred standing room tickets that were put on sale each night. At one performance of *Swan Lake* more than seven hundred would-be standers were turned away.

Those who managed to get in were treated to a company well rehearsed and magnificently disciplined through the twelve ballets that had been brought over. There were several individual triumphs, but first and foremost, honours for the season must go to Ninette de Valois. This company and our delight owe an incalculable debt to her genius, her dedication and her fixity of purpose. After the ovation of the opening night, Miss de Valois thanked the audience for its enthusiasm, stating that she and the company had been fearful of their reception. I think I express the sentiments of a great part of the public when I say that we had expected a fine company and got even more than we had hoped for. Ballet will never be the same in New York henceforth. Having seen what magnificent

FREDERICK ASHTON, ALEXIS RASSINE, MICHAEL SOMES AND JUNE BRAE ARE "FRATERNISING" WITH SOME AMERICAN GUESTS AT THE J. ALDEN TALBOT PARTY

Photograph by courtesy of "Dance News"

THE EVENING AFTER THE TRIUMPHANT NEW YORK OPENING, MISS DE VALOIS, THOUGH SHE WAS ILL AND RETIRED TO BED IMMEDIATELY AFTER, GAVE A TALK AT THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY. DR. CARLETON SPRAGUE SMITH, HEAD OF THE MUSICAL DIVISION, IS INTRODUCING HER, AND SEATED ON THE PLATFORM ARE SIR FRANCIS EVANS, BRITISH CONSUL-GENERAL IN NEW YORK AND DR. RALPH A. BEALE, DIRECTOR OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

artistic direction has been able to accomplish with a company handicapped as Sadler's Wells has been, the public will insist on comparable standards for our own companies.

We have brilliant dancers in America, and in the case of the men, perhaps even better dancers technically than the English. We have the resources for big new ballets, for outstanding sets, for first-rate productions; and we have excellent ballets in our repertoires at present. But now, I believe, New York audiences will demand that all the elements be fused into well-integrated wholes, that the stars be subordinated to the ballets themselves and that ragged ends be tidied up.

For the big difference between Sadler's Wells and our own companies is that there are few unimportant details in the former which are neglected or passed over hurriedly. The *corps* is more than a frame for the principals. They all act together to express the choreographer's balletic intentions. Only uncompromising artistic authority can bring this about, and that is why Miss de Valois or someone with some of her drive and faith is the prime difference between the large American companies and the Wells.

Another important factor is the continuity of policy and tradition in Sadler's Wells. Because of the lack of fundamental interpretative satisfactions, we have a large turnover of dancers, particularly *corps* and small soloists every year. When artistic satisfactions are lacking our dancers do not hesitate to accept the more lucrative offers of Broadway musicals and the Hollywood films. And so our *corps* do not have time to develop into well-balanced teams. As a matter of fact, there have been occasions when half the *corps* was new and learned ten to twenty ballets in a four weeks' rehearsal period.

The choice of *The Sleeping Beauty* for the opening performance was especially happy. Here was a full-evening ballet, in itself a novelty for New York audiences. The production was handsome, the sets and costumes looked fresh and the orchestra, under Constant Lambert, did a fine job. Except for one or two periods when it seemed a little slow, it was geared to the dancers on the stage and was yet another component of the successful evening. The long interludes of mime, which some feared might prove tiresome, went very well, and the critics matched superlatives with one another next morning.

Margot Fonteyn was a revelation. She has always been able to rise to occasions, but this time she surpassed herself. I have never seen her dance with

such technical command or such control of the audience. Burst after burst of applause rolled out from the audience, and after the Rose Adagio a full-throated shout of acclaim went forth. I learned later that all through the cinema appearances that preceded the American tour she found time to practise the Rose Adagio for two hours every day with her cavaliers. She danced throughout as if dancing were as natural as walking. These were not complex steps as she wove them together, to be cheered as feats of virtuosity. She made the difficult appear unforced, and her great elegance has never been shown to better advantage. Her timing was unbelievably good as she drew the audience along with her to climax after climax. The one word for her performance is "great".

Robert Helpmann was an ideal prince. As a partner he was always sure and steady and his nobility of manner could not fail to impress. This was Miss Fonteyn's ballet but Mr. Helpmann's contribution should not be under-estimated, particularly in the last act. Moira Shearer and Alexis Rassine were the Bluebirds and did very well indeed, although Violetta Elvin, who danced the role at later performances, had more of the incisive attack which the Bluebird demands. Frederick Ashton was Carabosse and mimed the part with taste and restraint. It is so easy to overdo Carabosse and cross the boundary into burlesque, but Mr. Ashton knew what he was about. Violetta Elvin as the Fairy of the Crystal Fountain, Pamela May as the Fairy of the Enchanted Garden, Anne Negus as the Fairy of the Woodland Glades, Pauline Clayden as the Fairy of the Songbirds and Avril Navarre as the Fairy of the Golden Vine were neat and clean in their work. Beryl Grey as the Lilac Fairy was superb. This tall, beautiful dancer shone with her line, her precision, her strength and her easy grace. The Fairy Tales in Act 3 were all

EVEN THE SQUIRREL WAS ANXIOUS TO SEE ONE OF SADLER'S WELLS' FAMOUS DANCERS. THE DANCER IS VIOLETTA ELVIN AND THE PLACE IS CENTRAL PARK

humorously and deftly done, from Bluebeard and His Wife through the Danse Russe.

The Rake's Progress, *Symphonic Variations*, *Façade* and *Hamlet* comprised the next bill. Though Miss de Valois' ballet is almost fifteen years old it stands up well and brought the flavour of eighteenth century England to our front doors. Harold Turner did a very fine Rake, moving by stages from his inheritance of wealth to his demise in the madhouse. As Mr. Turner danced the part, he brought out the character of the Rake so well that his deterioration was both relentless and inevitable. Violetta Elvin was charming as the Betrayed Girl.

Symphonic Variations remains one of my favourite ballets of all time. Sophie Fedorovitch has provided a magnificent set that gives the feeling of airiness and spaciousness and blends so well with Mr. Ashton's creation, six dancers in an abstract ballet. This is abstract with a difference. One admires not only the inventiveness of the choreographer but also his heart, for Mr. Ashton has put heart into the action. Margot Fonteyn, Pamela May and Moira Shearer represented the distaff side and were ably complemented by Michael Somes, Brian Shaw and John Hart. Pamela May has retained the softness and eloquence in her movements that I remember with so much pleasure from London seasons. I regretted that casting arrangements did not make it possible to see more of her. A special word of praise must go to Jean Gilbert, the solo pianist, who played the César Franck variations. Her interpretation was a noteworthy part of the total effect.

After an orchestral interlude, *Aubade Héroique* by Constant Lambert, Ashton's *Façade* took the stage. A light, unpretentious work, it sparkled with gaiety, and the audience was generous with its appreciation. Frederick Ashton danced the Dago in a manner that left one chuckling constantly, and Moira Shearer was the Debutante, in which role she revealed that beneath her serene exterior lies a gay, laughing young woman. Michael Boulton and Brian Shaw hit just the right note in Popular Song, while Rosemary Lindsay polked a delightful polka.

Hamlet, which concluded the programme, gave Helpmann an opportunity to display his considerable dramatic talents in an expressionistic version of the familiar tragedy. It had an impressive dramatic impact. Margot Fonteyn was the Ophelia and June Brae, who was so effective in a variety of roles all through the season, was the Queen.

Cinderella, the next full-evening ballet, was something of a disappointment. There is not enough real dancing for one thing, and it seems unduly drawn out for another. Ashton and Helpmann seemed to be having a good time but that is not quite the same thing as underplaying and letting more of the audience in on the fun. Margot Fonteyn and Moira Shearer alternated in the title role. Both were excellent, Miss Shearer matching Miss Fonteyn in appeal. Brian Shaw and Alexander Grant both made good Jesters.

By the time *Le Lac des Cygnes* was given, the public was prepared for the kind of performances Miss Fonteyn could give in a classical role. She was a lovely Swan Queen, filled with the essential tragedy of the part, and when she finally threw herself into the lake we felt as hopeless as Siegfried. Michael Somes danced well as the Prince. At the final performance of the ballet, incidentally, he gave a really scintillating performance. Beryl Grey and John Field took over the leads at matinées. Miss Grey's conception of the Swan Queen is distinctively her own. It is not too much to say that one day she will join the ranks of the really celebrated. John Field makes her a fine partner. He is tall enough to work with her and his clean *entrechats huit* are still being talked about. Alexis Rassine, Margaret Dale and Nadia Nerina did a smooth *pas de trois*. Rassine's work improves from season to season. His line is beautiful and his soft, lyric style is one all too seldom seen nowadays. Pamela May and Gillian Lynne as the Leading Swans were a vital part of the success of Acts 2 and 4. Miss Lynne's expressive carriage and style bring a certain quality to every role she dances. I am looking forward to the day when she will dance the Swan Queen, at least in the one-act version. The Cygnets who danced with precision and grace were Anne Negus, Avril Navarre, Violetta Elvin and Pauline Clayden.

Robert Helpmann's *Miracle in the Gorbals* was next to be seen. Although it leaves much to be desired as ballet, it is exciting theatre. No matter how often I see it, I find myself caught up in the action and drawn to the edge of my chair. That this is possible in spite of its too-familiar characters is a tribute to the stage sense of its choreographer and principal dancer. Gerd Larsen was really splendid as the Prostitute, skilfully mixing wantonness, disgust and despair in her characterisation.

Next came the delicious *A Wedding Bouquet*. Mr. Ashton has neatly portrayed a gallery of characters and for each one has devised steps which bring out their differences in personality. I should like to have seen this ballet on the programme more often, but there will be other seasons. Robert Helpmann as the Bridegroom was just right for the part though sometimes his interpretation was a little broad.

It seems to me that it was a mistake to bring over *Apparitions*. It is long and it frequently moves to no visible purpose. There are always, however, beautiful things in every Ashton ballet. In this case I found them in the ballroom scene. Robert Helpmann was the Poet (a very busy evening for Mr. Helpmann) and Margot Fonteyn was the Woman in the Ball Dress.

Two ballets by Ninette de Valois rounded out the

season, *Checkmate* and *Job*. I found *Checkmate* extremely interesting. Beryl Grey was a striking Red Queen, Alexis Rassine was fine as the Red Knight and Gerd Larsen did nobly as the Red Queen. Wendy Winn and Franklin White as Love and Death set the tone for the entire work and executed ably their keynote assignment. Leslie Edwards was outstandingly good as the Red King. The duel between the Black Queen and the Red Knight remains one of the high spots of the season to me.

Job, however, did not seem to come off at all. It was important that it be presented as part of the continuing development of English ballet, but its tradition is so unfamiliar and it moves so slowly by American standards, that it was foredoomed. Robert Helpmann dominated the proceedings as Satan.

That is, in brief, the story of Sadler's Wells in New York.

What we have seen has whetted our taste for more. It is to be hoped that this has been only the first in a regular series of visits.

Melbourne Ballet Guild

While Walter Gore was in Melbourne last year with Ballet Rambert he arranged a small ballet for the Melbourne Ballet Guild and this was produced by them early this summer. Gore set this ballet to Gustav Holst's *St. Paul's Suite*, which he had previously used for his own small two-dancer *divertissement* known as *Bartlemas Dances*. This time, however, he used a small company and the ballet, which is now called *May Day*, was very well received by the Melbourne critics. Laurel Martyn, who directs the Melbourne Ballet Guild and who was with Sadler's Wells Ballet before the war, danced the leading part.

(Editorial Comment—continued from page 3)
and Teddy Rodolphe. Monsieur Reyna concludes :—"In spite of the sympathy Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées deserve for their efforts, these new ballets mark an obvious falling-off compared with their old repertoire." P.W.M.

AND THIS IS WHERE WE CAME IN. HERE ARE SOME OF THE COMPANY SAYING GOODBYE AT THE AIRPORT BEFORE FLYING TO AMERICA. *Left to right* : CHARLES GORDON ALMOST HIDING HIS WIFE, PAMELA MAY, MOIRA SHEARER WITH HER FIANCE, LUDOVIC KENNEDY, AND BERYL GREY WITH HAROLD ELVIN AND HIS WIFE VIOLETTA ELVIN

Photograph by G. B. L. Wilson

Action photograph by Frank Sharman

NATHALIE KRASSOVSKA AND WALTER GORE IN "GISELLE," ACT I

BALLET RAMBERT AT THE KING'S, HAMMERSMITH

By FRANK JACKSON

AFTER the first night of *Antonia* (Walter Gore's new ballet for the Rambert season at the King's Theatre, Hammersmith) I went on record as saying that I could neither like nor admire this work. Although, having seen it three times by the end of the season, I could not reverse my first judgment, there is much more that needs to be said about it.

And the first thing is that, in ballet criticism, the subjective factor plays a greater part than in any other form of criticism. Long experience has taught me to suppress my own current state of health and mind while I am in the theatre; but, in ballet, the state of health and mind of the dancers is of tremendous importance so that the very same steps can be danced quite differently on different occasions by the same dancers. Then, because ballet is essentially plastic, three dimensional, it is also true, unfortunately for ballet critics, that no two people in the audience see exactly the same thing—a difference which is magnified when one member of the audience is in the front stalls and another in the circle or gallery. Which is the choreographer to aim at? In either case he risks half his audience missing his point.

Gore has been criticised for revealing too obviously the influence of other choreographers in this new ballet. I was among such critics until I learned that this ballet had been worked out in some detail long before Gore could have seen Petit's *Carmen*. I still think *Antonia* is unusually derivative for Gore who had, at least, developed a strong style of his own, whether one liked it or not, but he can be absolved of all charges of conscious imitation.

The subject matter, too, has been accused of being dated and overworked. But Gore is not to blame for this, either. Even he, one of the most fortunate, though perhaps least appreciated, of choreographers,

in that he is attached to a less hide-bound, more adventurous organisation than most, even Gore must wait some time—years, even—before a new work of his can be mounted. The choreographer is scarcely to be blamed if, during this time his theme has been worn out elsewhere. The fate of choreographers not attached to a company is even more frustrating and needs immediate action so that workshop facilities can be provided for them. After all, it is useless to raise the standard of performance of our dancers unless we also produce choreographers who can use these talents. Or is our repertoire going to depend on revivals, with an occasional new work by one of a very small group of choreographers, plus a rare commission to a foreigner?

Once again, in *Antonia* is revealed that fusion of dancing with music (Sibelius in this case) which is Gore's great strength. And once again he has created a ballet in which the male dancer is as important as the female, and not merely a support or cavalier. His *pas de deux*, besides being of great interest plastically, are dances for two people, not one plus partner. Gore's men and women, too, are capable of human emotions not sublimated into neurotic symbolism. To accuse Gore of sensationalism is to misunderstand him; he is unlucky, again, in coming in for some of the backwash occasioned by *A Streetcar Named Desire* and, in any case, undisguised passion between a man and a woman has been a rare subject in British ballet which tends, on the whole, to be asexual, so that its appearance here is something of a surprise—a healthy one, I believe.

Yet, in spite of all these virtues, *Antonia* still cannot be claimed a complete success. The opening, in particular, with Gore clutching feverishly at a long red drape, borders on the ludicrous, and sections of the *ensembles* seem over-fussy a tendency emphasised by the costumes.

Paula Hinton looked, acted and danced magnificently in the name part. Some of her arm movements in terror or flight reminded me strongly of the Picasso of "Guernica"—though this is probably an individual reaction rather than a conscious influence. David Paltenghi was a feasible lover while, on one at least of the three occasions on which I saw this ballet, Gore himself gave a performance which was quite terrifying in its intensity.

The closer in the theatre I got to *Antonia* the more I was impressed by the significance of the detail—the expression on the face, a tiny gesture of the hands—but how much of this reached beyond the first few rows of the stalls? Criticisms of the ballet as "superficial" may in part be accounted for by this simple geographical factor.

There is little to say about the other items in the programme. *Simple Symphony*, beautifully danced, was, as always, a sheer delight. Gore's sensitivity to music, his lightheartedness and strength are all at their best here. I should dearly like to see him create a ballet of this kind for Covent Garden. *Kaleidoscope*, on the other hand, is already wearing very thin. It seems to me to go to pieces at the point when the veil is introduced, when technical trickery becomes an end in itself, instead of a means. *Peter and the Wolf*, when I saw it, was danced with great verve; here, and in the terrifying *Judgment of Paris* Margaret Hill once more displayed her neat sense of comedy, which makes its effects by understatement. Her Queen of the Wilis was also most striking, though here, and in her Prelude in *Les Sylphides*, she sometimes used so much energy that her arm movements in particular became jerky. It is certainly a pleasure to see such strength in a dancer, and, when she is more sure of herself, she will be able to make a deeper effect with less *apparent* expenditure of effort.

Nathalie Krassovska seemed to me temperamentally quite unsuited to *Giselle*, Act I; in Act II her dancing was stiff and jerky, and lacked flow. I was therefore agreeably surprised by her *Swan Lake* which was pleasingly lyrical and unmannered. Her Déesse de la Danse revealed her as possessing a delightful sense of comedy; but the point about *Gala Performance*, surely, is that, in spite of all the silliness, the actual dancing should be such as would justify the florid titles given to the ballerinas. Everyone was inclined to clown too

PAULA HINTON AND WALTER GORE IN "ANTONIA"

Action photograph by Frank Sharman

much here, a tendency, fortunately, not apparent in *Les Masques*, which remained a chuckle, not a belly-laugh.

Trailine, in *Casse Noisette*, *Les Sylphides* and a *pas de deux* from *Coppélia*, certainly jumped high, but his preparation and landing were less happy. Krassovska, for her part, seemed more at ease when partnered, less ostentatiously, by Gore.

In conclusion, it is to be hoped that the *succès de scandale* achieved so unexpectedly by *Antonia* may serve to reduce the time-lag on other new works for this company.

CLASSIC NATIONAL DANCES IN THE THEATRE

PART II

By FERNAU HALL

THE authentic flamenco dances of the Spanish gypsies have had much the same difficulties in establishing themselves in the European theatre as the classic dances of India. In flamenco dancing one can trace three main elements—the native Spanish, the Moorish and the Indian. (The gypsies are descended from a nomad tribe of North India, and still preserve many traditions of their original home.)

Flamenco shows great variety of mood and tempo and is technically of the greatest complexity ; it stands in roughly the same relation to the non-gypsy dances of Andalusia and Central Spain as the Indian classic styles stand in relation to Indian folk dances. Like Kathakali, flamenco has qualities of violence and uncouthness which make it difficult for people used to more gentle styles of dancing to appreciate ; and so Spanish dancers have always tended to adapt flamenco to what they consider to be the taste of their audiences. The cachuca with which Dolores Serral dazzled European audiences over a century ago seems to have owed its vitality to certain elements of flamenco, but it is possible that audiences of this period would have been horrified by the real thing. No other Spanish dancer made such an impression outside Spain until the miraculous Argentina came on the scene. Argentina based a number of her dances on flamenco models, but danced in a refined style, avoiding the uncouth and sensual aspects of flamenco, and performed set dances to the music of a piano. Real flamenco (like Kathak) is improvised according to strict rules, in a kind of telepathic rapport with the musician; the guitarist who accompanies a flamenco dancer is a creative artist in his own right, and the spectator (or the partner) beats out cross-rhythms with his hands which inspire the dancer just as do the cross-rhythms of the tabla player accompanying the Kathak dancer.

In one sense Argentina was all too successful. A large number of dancers tried to copy her: even Spanish gypsies neglected their traditional dances in favour of synthetic items of little more artistic value than the pseudo-Spanish numbers of cabaret, variety and film. This was a backward step, for as early as 1921 Diaghilev had presented *Cuadro Flamenco* with a troupe of Spanish dancers presenting something very close to the traditional gypsy entertainment. Perhaps Diaghilev was ahead of his time in this, as in so much else.

During the next two decades concert recitals by such distinguished artists as Argentina and Argentinita built up a widespread interest in Spanish dancing and accustomed non-Spanish audiences to the various Spanish styles. But real flamenco remained little known outside Spain ; and even in Spain itself it fought a losing battle with the synthetic theatrical dances—except in the famous gypsy "cities," the Triana of Seville and the Albaicin of Granada. This gave particular interest to the performances by Ana Esmeralda and her company: though *Spanish Rhapsody* included a high proportion of synthetic items, it also included three items of real flamenco—*Por Solea*, a farruca and part of *Sacromonte*. These three items, danced by Ana Esmeralda and Josele with perfect style, passionate intensity and incredible virtuosity of taconeo (heel-work), and accompanied in the traditional manner by clapped counter-rhythms and the music of a guitarist (David Moreno) who has "fingers of gold" (as the Spanish say), showed flamenco at its most exciting. Unfortunately Ana Esmeralda made a mistake in confining herself to two items of real flamenco: she is so essentially a flamenco artist that she is not happy in the so-called classic dances of Central and South Spain, and the synthetic items were too poor choreographically to give her much chance. Josele was seen to even less advantage : his brilliant improvisations in *Sacromonte* caused certain critics to dismiss him as an eccentric little gypsy dancer, in spite of the fact that

his farruca kept strictly to the pure flamenco tradition, without a single personal variant. It was obvious that both Ana Esmeralda and Josele have a large flamenco repertoire : let us hope that next time they will give us a more balanced and representative selection of flamenco dances.

Apart from Kathakali, all the classic traditional styles are intended to be seen at fairly close quarters by audiences of limited size, and depend for their effectiveness on the setting-up of an intense rapport between the artist and the spectators. (This is particularly obvious in flamenco, for here the dancer scowls at the ground and apparently ignores the audience, though in fact he or she is greatly helped by the traditional cries of encouragement and the rhythmic hand-claps). But traditional dancers are seriously mistaken when they imagine that to make their classic dances effective in a theatre they must coarsen and simplify the choreography. They must learn to do what every good ballet dancer does on moving from a small to a large theatre—i.e. widen the range of projection. This is a mental process which soon becomes automatic.

I am convinced that the present trend towards greater and greater authenticity in the presentation of classic national dances is in the right direction. The real thing has been brought to perfection by innumerable generations of gifted artists, and we are entitled to demand it, just as we are entitled to demand a production of *Petrouchka* as near as possible to Fokine's original. This does not mean that there is no place for choreographers making use of the Indian and flamenco styles with imagination and originality. In *Poema del Cante Jondo* Lorca showed with what originality a great poet can use cante jondo, the traditional songs of the Spanish gypsies. In fact Lorca's poems are so true to the tradition that they have become part of it, and are transmitted from singer to singer in the traditional way. But few poets have the genius of Lorca, and for every dancer capable of adding to the classic national styles there are a large number who can find full scope for their creative abilities within the traditional rules.

THE UNIQUE ARGENTINA IN "POLO GITANA"

From the Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson theatre collection

Canadian Dance Teachers' Association

THIS Association was formed at a meeting at Mildred Wickson's School of Dancing, Toronto, on October 23rd, which was attended by over fifty teachers from fifteen different towns and cities.

The aims of the Association are briefly: to encourage friendly relationship between teachers, to promote a free exchange of ideas, to build a strong, financially secure organisation—sufficiently powerful to insist on a high standard of ethics in the teaching of dancing. It is hoped that the Association will become influential enough substantially to improve the fields of opportunity for both amateur and professional dancers in Canada. An Association of this kind should be of great assistance to its members through the formation of scholarships, the dissemination of information gathered from all countries of the world, and through special "post-graduate" courses arranged with distinguished teachers from the United States of America and abroad.

Miss Mildred Wickson was elected President at this meeting, with Richard Errington of London, Vice-President; Jean Crawford of Toronto, Secretary; and Bernardette Carpenter of Toronto, Treasurer.

Miss Ninette de Valois gave a class for the Canadian Dance Teachers' Association when she was in Toronto during the visit of the Sadler's Wells Ballet.

REMEMBER

That from February, 1950, BALLET TODAY will come out *every month*, price *One Shilling*.

BUSH FOLK AND BALLET

By BETTY GILL

BALLET in Victoria, Australia, is "going bush". The colourful beauty and exciting vitality of this classical art form is being brought for the first time to country folk living in remote rural centres of this Australian State.

Behind the seemingly effortless grace of performances presented anew at successive two night stands in townships often hundreds of miles apart, lies the story of a company of forty-two young people, who love their profession above ease and comfort.

They form the National Ballet Company of the National Theatre Movement of Australia, which recently went on a one-month tour of northern and western areas of Victoria under the auspices of the Victorian Council of Adult Education. The company had the distinction of being the first full-scale ballet group with orchestra, to tour the State.

In four gruelling weeks they travelled 1,250 miles and gave 35 shows which were seen by 15,000 country people. It was hard work but they loved it. Their reward was the incredible enthusiasm of their new-found audiences.

With the company on tour were six who were previously with the internationally-famous Ballet Rambert, which toured Australia and New Zealand in 1947 and 1948. Joyce Graeme, who was principal dancer with the Rambert company and who stayed in Australia to build up this new young Australian

JOYCE GRAEME AND REX REID EXPLAIN DRESSING-ROOM SECRETS TO TWO ENTHRALLED YOUNG VISITORS

Australian official photograph by Jack Gallagher

company, is its director. Other dancers are Margaret Scott, Brenda Hamlyn, and Rex Reid.

Mr. John Dowey, who was manager and stage director of the Ballet Rambert, joined the Council of Adult Education to take charge of its Travelling Theatre Department. He was in charge of the ballet company's tour. Sixth member is Miss Constance Boynton, who took up her old position as wardrobe mistress.

Making up the company of forty-two, were the twenty-two dancers, an orchestra of fourteen and six stage hands.

At every show they had the "full house" signs out. The patrons were even queueing up for tickets—a rare necessity in the country.

As Miss Boynton said, "It never failed to amaze me. Between townships, we'd roll along through the wide open spaces with not a house and not a soul to be seen. And then hundreds would roll up to the ballet. I don't know where they all came from."

Highlight of the tour was at Donald, in the rich wheat-growing area of Victoria, the smallest town of all to be visited. The townsfolk hailed the company with great enthusiasm. Six hundred seats were sold in the first two hours of booking and the company played to an audience bigger than the total population of the town.

In other districts, people came from across the State in order to see the ballet. Extra matinées were played in two towns to satisfy the overflow.

Dancers and musicians travelled by parlour coach, with their luggage piled high on top. Stage crew went in a huge, gaily-coloured semi-trailer "mobile theatre", which carried the hampers of costumes, the backdrops, stage properties, and full lighting equipment.

The company kept to a strict, arduous schedule. Stage crew were up and away by 8.30 in the morning, heading for the next township billed. In the afternoon they would inspect the stage and set it up for the evening performance. Stages in country halls varied so much in width, depth and height, that it taxed their ingenuity. Correct placing of floodlights, footlights, spotlights, proscenium lights adds immeasurably to the final "look" of the ballet.

One of the dancers' worries was the lack of wing space for dancers going off or waiting to come on in a dramatic flurry. It was particularly difficult for a male lead who had to disappear off stage in a flying leap—with only a 2 ft. space to do it in!

After the matinée and the night's show, the stage crew at midnight would dismantle scenery, pack it all in the trailer and by 2 a.m. would be ready for bed. Next morning they would be travelling on to do it all over again.

Ballet members on tour observed the usual routine of the company in the city. When they were not actually travelling there was a class every morning at 10, a break for lunch, and rehearsals from 2 p.m. till 4 p.m.

Australian official photograph by Jack Gallagher

JOYCE GRAEME AND REX REID IN "ROMANTIC SUITE"

By 6.15 p.m. they were back again at the theatre, darning toe-shoes, washing tights, making up for the show, and having a private work-out. "Limbering up" was essential to work off their stiffness after long bus rides.

Make-shift dressing rooms and make-up rooms were another difficult feature. Local people usually loaned their hall-stand and bedroom mirrors for the make-up rooms.

This co-operation from country people was a distinctive feature of the trip.

"We had marvellous hospitality in all the country towns we visited," said Miss Graeme. "Parties were given for us nearly every night. The local women baked their own cakes for mammoth suppers."

"It's no wonder that I'm putting on weight," said June Wood, young Australian dancer.

The country folk billeted members of the company in their homes when hotel accommodation was overtaxed by the influx of ballet people and visitors who came from miles around to see the ballet.

Children in these homes were thrilled to have a real, live ballerina to talk to and show them how to dance on their toes. Many a mother is now being pestered for a pair of those magic shoes.

"Nothing could have been nicer than our trip," said John Dowey. "In the Australian cities I did not get

Photograph by Duncan Melvin

"PLEASUREDROME," A BALLET BY ROSELLA HIGHTOWER, PRIMA BALLERINA OF THE GRAND BALLET DE MONTE CARLO, WAS THE LAST NEW BALLET TO BE PRODUCED BY THE METROPOLITAN BALLET BEFORE IT DISBANDED FOLLOWING ITS FORTNIGHT AT THE PEOPLE'S PALACE, MILE END, AND TWO TELEVISION PERFORMANCES ON DECEMBER 9TH AND 14TH. CELIA FRANCA AND MICHEL DE LUTRY HAD LEADING PARTS IN "PLEASUREDROME"

a chance to know people. But, here in the country, you meet the real Australians. They are wonderful people, and I'm only sorry that our tour had to end. In every country township that we came to the whole population turned out to meet us and to talk to us. It dispelled the feeling that ballet people were not ordinary folk with a job to do just like themselves. It brought us very much closer together and brought also a deeper appreciation of ballet."

What particularly impressed the ballet company was the enthusiastic response from the children.

"The children's matinées brought some of the finest audiences we've ever played to," said Rex Reid. "They had never seen ballet before, but they took to it like ducks to water. There was not a sound or a move among them. All you could see was eyes, eyes, eyes."

"They were very receptive, very well disciplined—and absolutely spellbound," joined in Joyce Graeme. "One of the happiest memories we have of the trip is of the country children. At one cold place the schoolchildren brought round hot water bottles for us to cuddle in the cold dressing rooms. They also collected rugs as well, and brought jugs of hot water for the musicians to dip their frozen fingers into. And, they didn't just do that for the matinée, they brought them again for the evening's ballet. It was real thoughtfulness."

Though the children had not seen ballet before they did go armed with some knowledge. The country teachers had asked in advance for the programmes which included *Aurora's Wedding*, *Romantic Suite*, *Prince Igor* and the *Loves of Pierrette*, and other favourites. They told the children about ballet itself, the stories of the ballets presented, and also theatre procedure.

Striking décor and exquisite costumes used were designed by noted Australian painters Kenneth Rowell, Robert Felix and Nancy Gooderham. The company used full-size sets from their two successful seasons in Melbourne and Adelaide in the provincial centres. In the smaller townships they used smaller duplicate back-drops.

The programmes were a happy blend of classic, romantic and light ballets. The new audiences found it hard to choose between the classical purity of *Aurora's Wedding*, the airy lightness of the *Romantic Suite* and the primitive vigour of *Prince Igor*.

This first tour of the company has brought many pleas for the ballet to come back to the bush. From this, the young company derives the assurance that it has done something to extend the realm of ballet.

VISION AND STAGE

By LISA GORDON SMITH

THIS year's Radiolympia was a great occasion for balletomane viewers, for the performing company was Ballet Rambert, old and experienced hands at television. Madame Rambert is always a pioneer, but it is with some surprise that one recalls her company were the first to dance "over the air" in the more experimental days of vision.

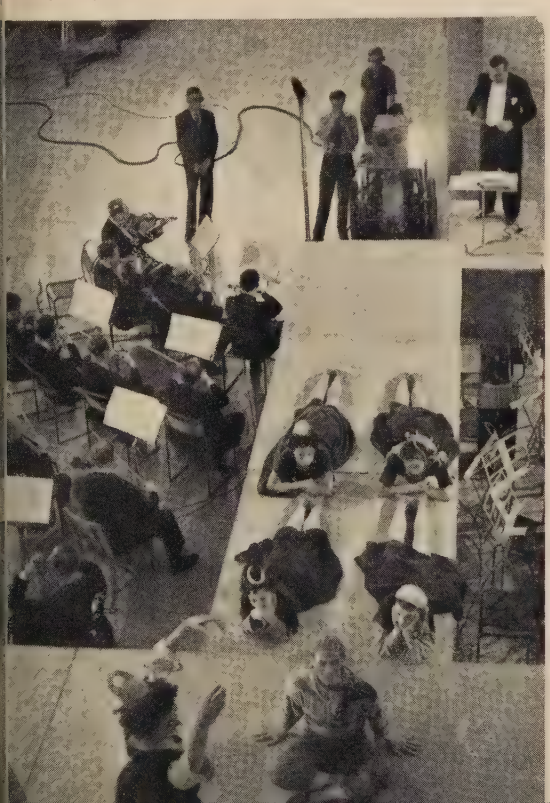
Christian Simpson produced on October 5th, and appeared to be making the most of the opportunities offered by the larger space, though from a press seat in the studio it was, naturally, difficult to assess what the viewers were getting over their screens.

The company danced beautifully and seemed as much at home in the studio as on the stage.

"The Land of Sweets" from *Casse-Noisette* opened the programme, with Nathalie Krassovska and Boris Trailine, the guest artists, dancing the principal roles with elegance and assurance. Paula Hinton's Eastern Dance was a masterpiece of character dancing.

ALTER GORE'S BALLET, "SIMPLE SYMPHONY," BEING TELEVISED AT THIS YEAR'S RADIOLYMPIA

B.C. photograph



Death and the Maiden followed, as moving as ever in its nobly designed simplicity, and the performances of Margaret Hill and David Paltenghi had a fitting dignity.

The programme ended on a gayer note with Walter Gore's *Simple Symphony* in which he, Paula Hinton and the company danced in true Rambert style—a statement which, to ballet-lovers, makes further praise superfluous.

On November 4th, Philip Bate presented the world première of *Paradise Row* on television. This ballet, completed some time previously, was held back for the occasion by the choreographer, John Regan.

This, the first Cockney ballet, is a gem, and was perfectly performed by *Les Ballets des Trois Arts*. All the company were extremely good, but perhaps especial praise is due to Joy Camden for her good dancing as well as for her interpretation of the horribly ubiquitous Precocious Child.

Philip Bate produced brilliantly, missing nothing of the clever choreography, in which John Regan used floor patterns to portray character, notably the oblique zig-zags of the Spiv, the straight lines of the Honest Barrow Boy, the vaccillating curves for his troubled sweetheart and the wasp-like dartings of the Child.

A fine piece of teleballet which promises equally well as a stage production.

Among the less publicised stage shows, the Alan Turner Ballet came from Derby to the Fortune Theatre on October 13th and gave a very good account of themselves. They are an amateur company, forming part of the cultural activities provided by the Ernest Turner group of industries, and, judged by amateur standards, are outstandingly good. There are some excellent dancers in the group, notably their choreographer and ballet mistress, Sonia Langridge, and Marcia Bull, who has a finished style not often seen in an amateur dancer. The production was ambitious enough to be worth while without being beyond the company's capabilities.

In the sudden absence of their own male dancer, they had engaged John Hall, a young professional dancer, for the male roles. His neat and competent technique and able partnering were a pleasure to watch.

Nearer home, many of the London Ballet Clubs combined to put on a show at the Twentieth Century Theatre on October 17th, under the good organisation of the Beverley Ballet Club.

The smallness of the stage marred many of the more ambitious productions, but the expressive dancing of

Mary Paine in the name-part of the Phoenix Ballet Club's *Leda* was outstanding.

Demeter Company, known exponents of the "Modern" school, gave *Mariner's Folly* by Jane Winearls, an old favourite which does not stale with repetition.

The R.A.D. Production Club gave a slightly altered version of their previously successful exercise-ballet *In the Classroom*. This time it was less engaging, for lack of space and an ill-fitting stage-cloth made precisely concerted movement, the first essential of this ballet, an impossibility, but the dancers met a difficult situation with good humour and considerable stagecraft.

Wimbledon Ballet Club chose the wiser course in presenting two admirable *pas de trois* in which Gillian Reed and Corinne Duvernay, supported by Robert Webley, danced with great charm and considerable skill.

The recital method of production was also adopted by professional dancers at the Kingsway Hall on October 27th, in an entertainment organised by the incorporated Hindu Association of Europe.

Here, Modern Dancing was represented by some students from Sigurd Leeder's professional class, and classical ballet by Anna Marinova, who, supported by John Williamson, gave a good performance despite a badly joined sectional stage which might have been designed as a trap for *pointe* shoes.

Consuelo Carmona and Angelo Andes, making their last London appearance before going on a short tour for the Arts Council, danced with something more than their remembered brilliance and beauty, and deservedly received the ovation of the evening. Excellently supported by their accompanist, Trevor Fisher, they presented Spanish dances in the idioms of the classical, peasant and flamenco.

Auzurie, famous on stage and screen in India, and now in England on a cultural mission, gave some wonderful examples of the pure, uncommercialised dance of India with her partner Surya, and Sushil Kumar, a most promising young man.

England can do with seeing more of Auzurie and her group of dancers and pupils, for the beauty of their dancing is equalled only by its sincerity.

To the Editor,

BALLET TODAY.

Dear Madam :—

I am considering the formation of a Hilarion Defence League, and should be glad to hear from any supporters among your readers.

Hilarion is, surely, the most misunderstood and misjudged character in the entire range of ballet. Nobody ever has any sympathy for him, and yet a little thought will convince almost anyone that it is he, not Albrecht, who is morally in the right. After all, Albrecht (falsely calling himself Loys) was, in fact, intending to deceive Giselle. He has no defence when Bathilde confronts him with the truth. Remember, too, that Hilarion had, himself, been deeply in love with Giselle. What else could he do then but try and warn her of her danger?

But all he gets for his pains is humiliation from Albrecht (as though it were Hilarion who was responsible for Giselle's madness) and later the death sentence from Myrtha who, as a supernatural being, might at least have been able to see matters as they really stood, unbiased by human loves, hates and ethics.

The only explanations for this attempt to enlist the sympathy of the audience on the side of lies and immorality are either the frivolous one that Albrecht is handsome while Hilarion usually wears a beard; or the even more awful to consider, that there is one law for the rich and another for the poor.

In either case, it is about time Hilarion had his rights and I hope with this letter to enlist support in a campaign to win them for this wronged man, whose wrongs persist as often as *Giselle* is performed—and any regular balletgoer knows how often *that* is.

Yours sincerely,

FRANK JACKSON.

ELAINE FIFIELD AND DAVID POOLE IN "SWAN LAKE," ACT 2
SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE

Photograph by Gordon Anthony

Balletomane's Bookshelf

BALLET GUYED. *By* Peter Revitt (with an introduction by Mary Clarke). Published by BALLET TODAY, 5*s*.

Reviewed by CARYL BRAHMS

And guyed to the top of a cartoonist's penetrating bent in three dozen punctures. The contemporary Ballet, seen from the caricaturist's perpetual tilt, is art at an angle, indeed. But let me say at once that Revitt is not content to apply the perilous shorthand of his vision to the summing-up of his subject's less fortunate features. The mirthless merriment of Fonteyn, Toumanova's sad Russian soul, bravely balancing on her strong, single *pointe*. Good old Beryl's indomitable Good Old Virtuosity—all this is child's chalk to Peter Revitt. By a miracle of observation and dexterity he conveys, too, something of the quality of their dancing. Even if you have not been lucky enough to see all his subjects for yourself *sur scène*, you could hardly fail to be amused by Revitt's gay galliard as here depicted: Jean Babilée's livid fervour, for instance, under his shock of hair in *Le Jeune Homme et La Mort* and the supple undulations of Violetta Elvin's movement as faithfully reflected in her pose as *La Mort Amoureuse*. The pre-historic, pro-aristocratic bearing of Frederick Ashton's opera cloak. Renée Jeanmaire who clearly put the men in Carmen. Robert Helpmann in *Giselle*, with the make-up of a Pierrot of as many Minutes as his stage age admits. Rosella Hightower, a strong Black Swan with the expression of a kind black spaniel. The dedication of Alicia Markova *en quatrième* in *Giselle*. Moira Shearer, all hopeful, cheerful, daintiness and mascara. And cushiony old lady Irène Skorik's Taglioni in *La Sylphide* (she who has been said to have observed at the end of a dancing lesson at Kensington Palace "*Mon Dieu*—that one will never make a ballerina"—"that one" being Queen Victoria). These are aspects, too, which have not been overlooked in Revitt's masterpieces of overstatement. Last in the gallery of delectable distortions is a *pas de quatre chorégraphique* which I would have given my hope of no *Coppélia* decorated by William Chappell in heaven to have been able to achieve in words—a chubby, chinless Helpmann hand in hand with a lean and merry Massine in hand with a passionate Petit in hand with an affronted Ashton, which not all the fine flowers of Richard Buckle's prose style, the polysyllabic embranglements of A. V. Coton's criticisms, the sadly strained mother love of the editor of this journal and the practical acidity of La Brahms could hope to achieve. Here is every balletgoer's Christmas Box.

PETER REVITT'S *Ballet Guyed*
LEO KERSLEY IN "LES SYLPHIDES"

MOIRA SHEARER—PORTRAIT OF A DANCER. By Pigeon Crowle. (Faber and Faber, 21*s*. net).

Apart from the hectic dust jacket, this book is as beautifully produced as all those from the house of Faber. Obviously written by an enthusiastic admirer, it is an accurate account of the first twenty-three years of a very talented young dancer's life. The occasional dissertations into the origins of Ballet and the development of Sadler's Wells Ballet by Ninette de Valois seem introduced as padding for a necessarily short book but in the main Miss Crowle sticks to her theme. But the question arises—is the life of a dancer in her early twenties who, in the nature of things, can only be on the threshold of her career, sufficient material for a book ?

Exceptionally, e.g. in the case of the career of Nijinsky, the answer might be "Yes." Moira Shearer however, is one of those lucky people whose path has

ALEXANDRA DANILOVA IN THE GRAND PAS DE DEUX FROM "PAQUITA" WHICH SHE REVIVED DURING THE BALLET RUSSE DE MONTE CARLO SEASON AT THE METROPOLITAN OPERA HOUSE IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO THE SADLER'S WELLS SEASON

been unremittingly smooth. Born in comfortable circumstances, knowing from an early age that she wanted to be a dancer and being trained towards that end, she was a soloist in the leading English company by the age of sixteen and has gone steadily forward from there. There have been small obstacles and disappointments but it cannot be said that she has had to struggle for her position ; and though it is pleasant to read of someone to whom life has been so kind, that fact in itself does not make for interest. Moira Shearer is beautiful, charming, talented, hardworking, conscientious and sincerely ambitious. All this Miss Crowle brings out, but I am afraid it is not enough to make a book.

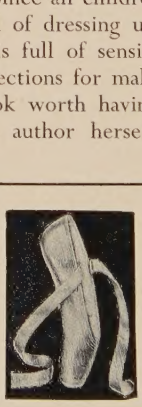
BACKGROUND TO A BALLET. By John F. Speed with 60 original photographs by Louis Klemantaski. (Louis Klemantaski Ltd. 3s. 6d. net.)

This is a photographic record of Sadler's Wells Ballet at Covent Garden. All that any ballet lover has always wanted to know about what goes on "at the back" will be found here. The painting of scenery, preparation of props, the making of tutus, the setting of the stage, dancers in class and rehearsal and unusual views of the ballets as seen from the wings, all are here at a modest price within the reach of everyone.

THE CHILDREN'S THEATRE BOOK FOR YOUNG DANCERS AND ACTORS. By Cecile Walton (A. & C. Black Ltd., 10s. 6d. net.)

Since all children have an inborn love of the theatre and of dressing up, this is the book for every child. It is full of sensible advice and information, and the directions for making a model theatre alone make the book worth having. It is enchantingly illustrated by the author herself and Mr. Edward W. Robertson.

(*Continued at top of next page*)



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NGLAND'S DANCES. Folk Dancing Today and esterday. By Douglas Kennedy. (G. Bell & Sons d., 7s. 6d. net.)

Mr. Kennedy is a director of the English Folk Dance d Song Society and for many years was a colleague Cecil Sharp to whom we owe the continuation of the lk dance tradition in this country. This book traces e origins of the primitive dance and describes with vid enthusiasm the various traditional dances and ocessions which are to be found in different parts of ngland.

HERE'S MONEY IN DANCING. By Rose Tenent. essrs. Vawser & Wiles have now brought out a cheap per cover edition of this book at 2s. with the addition numerous illustrations. It is a useful guide to the ssibilities of dancing as a career in all its branches.

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A QUARTERLY REVIEW

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EDITORIAL : " SHORT AND BITTER"

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